

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I join my colleagues today in recognizing the distinguished Senator from South Carolina and his years of service in the U.S. Senate.

STROM THURMOND has lived almost one century—his 100th birthday will be December 5th—and he has been a Senator for almost half of that time. He is now finishing his eighth full term, making him the longest serving Senator and the oldest Member of Congress. But Senator THURMOND is known—and will long be remembered—for much more than his longevity.

He has had a remarkable life and career of service to South Carolina and the United States, having served as a school superintendent, State Senator, judge, and as the Palmetto State's Governor.

He entered the Nation's military when he was 21 years old and almost 20 years later volunteered to serve in World War II. He was among the brave American troops who landed in Normandy on D-day with the 82nd Airborne Division, and he received numerous awards for his military service including the Bronze Star for Valor and a Purple Heart.

Senator THURMOND has fought no less fiercely in the political arena. He has used his gifts, experience, the power and respect he has earned and knowledge of Senate rules and procedures to advocate on behalf of his causes.

Although he has switched political parties during his career, serving first as a Democrat, running for President as a "States Rights" third-party candidate in 1948, and becoming a Republican in 1964, he has consistently adhered to his political ideology.

I am glad that we have an opportunity to acknowledge his contributions and to reflect on the considerable impact he has had on this body, his party, and the Nation.

Senator THURMOND is a living monument but just to make sure his service is recognized, the people of South Carolina, whom he has represented for so long, have honored him by erecting a monument for him and naming dozens of facilities for him.

Senator THURMOND will certainly be missed around here. I bid him farewell and extend my best wishes to him and his family.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the hour of 12:30 having arrived and passed, the Senate will now stand in recess until the hour of 2 p.m.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent morning business be extended.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator from South Carolina.

THANKING THE SENATE

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, I am surely honored by the generous re-

marks of my colleagues, Senator DASCHLE, Senator LOTT, Senator HOLLINGS, Senator BYRD, Senator STEVENS, Senator HUTCHISON, Senator ALLARD, Senator SPECTER, Senator ALLEN, Senator MCCONNELL, and all others.

It is hard for me to believe that it was about 80 years ago that I began my professional career. Beginning as a school teacher and coach, I have enjoyed public service as a County Superintendent of Education, attorney, State Senator, State Circuit Judge, military officer, Governor, and Senator. While I have enjoyed each and every job I have held over the years, there is no job I have treasured more than serving as a U.S. Senator. I am proud to be a member of this remarkable legislative body and have been blessed to observe nearly a half-century of our Nation's history from within this chamber. I still recall the cold Christmas Eve, December 24, 1954, when I was sworn in by then Vice-President Richard Nixon, with my late wife, Jean, by my side.

I came to Washington with one priority—to serve this Nation and my fellow South Carolinians with integrity and to the best of my ability. As I now enter the final days of my Senate career, with nearly 48 years of Senate service, I trust I have accomplished that objective.

The U.S. Senate is a special institution in many respects. The six-year term assures that there is the stability within this chamber which allows the Senate to be a deliberative body. The great history of this body reflects the great issues of American History. Here we have debated fundamental questions regarding the status of our Union, national territorial expansion, matters of war and peace, social and economic policies affecting every individual, and many other important matters of national interest as well as local issues.

Given the esteemed stature of this legislative body, it was with no small amount of humility that I moved from South Carolina to Washington so many years ago. Like every other man and woman who serves in the Senate, regardless of party affiliation or ideology, I desired to perform my duties with honor, to the best of my ability, and with a goal of making a difference in the lives of my fellow citizens.

As Senators, we have many roles to perform in the discharge of our duties. There is no other job in the world that allows us to have a more direct impact on improving the lives of individuals and strengthening our Nation. Through legislation, oversight, and old-fashioned constituent service, each of us is able to help the citizens of our respective States, as well as build a Nation which is stronger and better for all who live here. The work we do here benefits millions of Americans. One cannot help but take great satisfaction and pride in such important service.

As legislators we are called upon to vote on matters of local concern and national interest. I have cast over

16,300 rollcall votes as a U.S. Senator. Each vote is cast considering the concerns of my constituents and what is right for our Nation. While I have missed a few votes, I am pleased that I have been present for over 95 percent of all rollcall votes called by the Senate during my time in office.

It is the floor debate and the rollcall votes that citizens most closely associate with the work of the U.S. Senate. When visitors come to the Capitol, the overwhelming majority of them visit the Senate and House Galleries to watch their Congress in action. I suspect that most Americans are less familiar with the Committee system, but as we all know, that is where a significant amount of the work of this institution is accomplished.

During my Senate career, I have been privileged to serve on a number of Committees in the U.S. Senate. As a member and Chairman of the Armed Services Committee I worked hard to help build the finest military force that history has seen. On the Judiciary Committee, which I also chaired, my priorities were to safeguard the Constitution, keep the judicial branch independent and staffed with well qualified men and women, and enact sound policies to help make our communities safe. As a founding member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee I have always fought to ensure that the men and women of our Armed Forces receive the health care and benefits they deserve. On each of the Committees I served, I associated with Senators who were expert in their areas of oversight, who took their duties as Committee Members seriously, and who were exceptional legislators.

One of the primary duties of a Senator is to represent and assist constituents. I consider constituent service to be the most significant aspect of my Senate career. I am pleased that my Senate office has helped hundreds of thousands of South Carolinians interact with a government bureaucracy that can sometimes be confusing, unyielding, and intimidating.

As the calendar draws closer to the day that I walk out of the door of Room 217 of the Russell Senate Office Building, I know that pundits and historians will examine my career and study my service and achievements. I pray that such an examination will determine that I was a man who rendered a worthy service to the Nation and to my State. I hope I am known, above all, as a man who tried to help others. I also acknowledge that whatever I have been able to achieve, through my years of Senate service, it was largely through working closely with my colleagues.

No single individual can accomplish what has to be done here without recognizing the contribution of those who served before we arrived. When I think of the South Carolinians who occupied this seat before me, I am humbled. To follow in the footsteps of such distinguished men as Pierce Butler, Charles